

Dhammacakkappavattana Suttanta

Introduction

As a supplement to my original studies on the Parittas published some time ago I am glad to add to this monograph the text of the Dhammacakkappavattana Suttanta and a very new translation of it I have made, together with a few illuminating notes.

The Dhammacakkappavattana, we consider, is the best-ever presented thesis for the award of a degree, the subject covering both planes of the mundane and the transcendental. The trustworthiness of data gathered together, and the precise mode of presentation of this sutta makes it unsurpassable. We take this sutta as the Buddha's first presentation of his religious message to the world, what he discovered as the truths of life of man, unpleasant though and even unacceptable to some in their reality, without any attempt at camouflage. The authorship of this unpleasant lot of man, the Buddha lays at the door step of man himself and makes him responsible for working out his own salvation. It is not a divine revelation, with the possibility of divine intervention.

In its totality, the sutta contains both the theory and the practice of Buddhism, whether one calls it a religion or a philosophy. Without both a convinced and comprehensive awareness of the unsatisfactory nature of life, namely *dukkha*, one will not turn with sufficient firmness in the direction of liberation or *mutti* which is Nirvana. Volumes can be sensibly written on the scope and content of this sutta. But we do not attempt it here.

Do not be merely lured by the musical charm of the recital of this sutta, or by the symbolic and ritualistic drumming and bell ringing that is associated with its recital. Follow carefully the instructions relating to the grasp of the realities of life as inunciated in the first and second truths or *ariya-sacca*. Note particularly the twelfefold presentation of the fourfold Truths. Then understand that your

salvation lies in the achievement or attainment of the third *sacca* of *nirodha*. These first three *saccas* make, more or less, the theory content of Buddhism. Then come to the last of the *saccas* in *maggā* or the way to achieve your desired goal.

This will convince you that merely listening in is no more than peripheral. At least gain an entry into the Path by coming to grips with *sammādiṭṭhi* or getting your vision as a Buddhist, corrected through a serious study of the Dhamma. We wish you luck.

Dhammacakkappavattana Suttantaṃ

[The text as found at Samyutta Nikaya V. 420 - 424 and Vinaya I. 10 - 12]

Evam me sutaṃ ekaṃ samayam Bhagavā Bārāṇasiyaṃ viharati Isipatane Migadāye. Tatra kho Bhagavā Pañcavaggiye bhikkhū āmantesi. Dve ' me bhikkhave antā pabbajitena na sevitabbā. Katame dve.

Yo c ' āyaṃ kāmesu kāmasukhallikānuyogo hīno gammo pothujjaniko anariyo anattasaṃhito. Yo c ' āyam attakilamathānuyogo dukkho anariyo anattasaṃhito. Ete te bhikkhave ubho ante anupagamma majjhimā paṭipadā Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā cakkhukaraṇī ñāṇakaraṇī upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya samvattati.

Katamā ca sā bhikkhave majjhimā paṭipadā cakkhukaraṇī ñāṇakaraṇī upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya samvattati. Ayam eva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo seyyath' īdaṃ sammādiṭṭhi sammāsaṅkappo sammāvācā sammākammanto sammāājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati sammāsamādhi. Ayaṃ kho sā bhikkhave majjhimā paṭipadā Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā cakkhukaraṇī ñāṇakaraṇī upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya samvattati.

Idaṃ kho pana bhikkhave dukkham ariyasaccaṃ. Jāti pi dukkhā jarā pi dukkhā vyādhi pi dukkho maraṇam pi dukkhaṃ sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā ' pi dukkhā. Appiyehi sampayogo dukkho piyehi vippayogo dukkho yam p ' icchaṃ na labhati tam ' pi dukkhaṃ. Saṅkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā.

Idaṃ kho pana bhikkhave dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccaṃ. Yā ' yaṃ taṇhā ponobhavikā nandī rāgasahagatā tatra tatrābhinandinī seyyath' īdaṃ kāmataṇhā bhavataṇhā vibhavataṇhā.

Idaṃ kho pana bhikkhave dukkhanirodham ariyasaccaṃ. Yo tassā yeva taṇhāya asesavirāganirodho cāgo paṭinissaggo mutti anālayo.

Idaṃ kho pana bhikkhave dukkhanirodhagāminīpaṭipadā ariyasaccaṃ. Ayam eva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo seyyath' īdaṃ sammāditṭhi sammāsaṅkappo sammāvācā sammākammanto sammāājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati sammāsamādhi.

Idaṃ dukkham ariyasaccan ' ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi. Taṃ kho pan ' idaṃ dukkham ariyasaccam pariññeyyan ' ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi. Taṃ kho pan' idaṃ dukkham ariyasaccam pariññātan ' ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

Idaṃ dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccan ' ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi. Taṃ kho pan' idaṃ dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccam pahātabban ' ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi. Taṃ kho pan' idaṃ dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccam pahīnan ' ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko

udapādi.

Idaṃ dukkhanirodham ariyasaccan ' ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi. Taṃ kho pan' idaṃ dukkhanirodham ariyasaccaṃ sacchikātabban ' ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi. Taṃ kho pan' idaṃ dukkhanirodham ariyasaccaṃ sacchikatan ' ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

Idaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminīpaṭipadā ariyasaccan ' ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi. Taṃ kho pan' idaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminīpaṭipadā ariyasaccam bhāvetabban ' ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi. Taṃ kho pan' idaṃ dukkhanirodha-gāminīpaṭipadā ariyasaccam bhāvitān ' ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

Yāvakīvañ ca me bhikkhave imesu catusu ariyasaccesu evaṃ tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇadassanaṃ na suvisuddham ahosi n ' eva tāvāham bhikkhave sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiyā pajāya sadevamanussāya anuttaraṃ sammā-sambodhim abhisambuddho ' ti paccaññāsiṃ.

Yato ca kho me bhikkhave imesu catusu ariyasaccesu evaṃ tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇadassanaṃ suvisuddham ahosi athāham bhikkhave sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiyā pajāya sadevamanussāya anuttaraṃ sammā-sambodhim abhisambuddho ' ti paccaññāsiṃ. „āṇañ ca pana me dassanam udapādi. Akuppā me cetovimutti. Ayam antimā jāti. Natthi ' dāni punabbhavo ' ti.

Idam avoca Bhagavā. Attamanā pañcavaggiyā bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsitam abhinandum. Imasmiñ ca pana veyyākaraṇasmim bhaññamāne āyasmato Koṇḍaññaassa virajaṃ vītamaḷaṃ dhammacakkhum udapādi yaṃ kiñ ci samudayadhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ ' ti.

Evam pavattite ca pana Bhagavatā dhammacakke bhummā devā saddam anussāvesuṃ. Etam bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyam Isipatane Migadāye anuttaraṃ dhammacakkam pavattitam appativattiyaṃ samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā Brahmunā vā kena ci vā lokasmin ' ti.

Bhummānaṃ devānaṃ saddaṃ sutvā Cātummahārājikā devā saddam anussāvesuṃ Etam bhagavatā... Cātummahārājikānaṃ devānaṃ saddaṃ sutvā Tāvātimsā devā saddam anussāvesuṃ Etam bhagavatā... Yāmā devā... Tusitā devā... Nimmānaratī devā... Paranimmita-vasavattino devā... Brahmakāyikā devā saddam anussāvesuṃ Etam bhagavatā... lokasmin ' ti.

Iti ' ha tena khaṇena tena layena tena muhuttana yāva Brahmaloḷkā saddo abbhuggaṇchi. Ayañ ca dasasahassī lokadhātu saṃkampi sampakampi sampavedhi. Appamāṇo ca ulāro obhāso loke pātur ahoṣi atikkamma devānaṃ devānubhāvan ' ti.

Atha kho bhagavā udānam udānesi. Aññāsi vata bho Koṇḍañño aññāsi vata bho Koṇḍañño ' ti. Iti ' h ' idam āyasmato Koṇḍaññaassa Aññā Koṇḍañño tveva nāmam ahoṣī ' ti.

Translation

[The text as found at Samyutta V. 420 - 424 and Vinaya I. 10 -12]

Thus I have heard. At one time the Exalted One was dwelling in Benares at the Deer Park of Isipatana. There the Exalted One addressed the monks of the

Group - of - Five and said: There are, O monks, two extremes which a *pabbajita*, i.e. one who has renounced household life, should not resort to. What two?

This practice of leaning towards the enjoyment of sense pleasures [*kāmesu kāmasukhallikānuyogo*] which is low [*hīno*], rustic [*gammo*], vulgar [*pothujaniko*], ignoble [*anariyo*] and associated with evil consequences [*anattasamhito*]. And this other leaning towards self-torture which is painful [*dukkho*], ignoble [*anariyo*] and associated with evil consequences [*anattasamhito*]. O monks, avoiding these two extremes, the middle way has been comprehended [*abhisambuddhā*] by the Buddha [Tathāgata] which generates the eye of vision [*cakkhukaraṇī*], generates wisdom [*ñāṇakaraṇī*], leads to tranquility [*upasamāya*], to higher wisdom [*abhiññāya*]. to full enlightenment [*sambodhāya*] and to the termination of Samsāra [*nibbānāya*].

What is that middle way which the Tathāgata has comprehended which generates the eye or vision [*cakkhukaraṇī*], generates wisdom [*ñāṇakaraṇī*], leads to tranquility [*upasamāya*], to higher wisdom [*abhiññāya*]. to full enlightenment [*sambodhāya*] and to the termination of Samsāra [*nibbānāya*].

It is this Noble Eightfold Path, namely corrected [*sammā*] view, corrected thought patterns [*saṅkappo*], corrected ways of speech [*sammā vacā*], corrected bodily activity [*sammā kammanto*], corrected forms of livelihood [*sammā ājīvo*], corrected forms endeavour [*sammā vāyāmo*], corrected mindfulness [*sammā sati*] and corrected concentration of mind [*sammā samādhi*].

This is that middle way which the Tathāgata has comprehended which generates the eye or vision [*cakkhukaraṇī*], generates wisdom [*ñāṇakaraṇī*], leads to tranquility [*upasamāya*], to higher wisdom [*abhiññāya*]. to full enlightenment [*sambodhāya*] and to the termination of Samsāra [*nibbānāya*].

This, O monks, is the noble truth of unsatisfactoriness [*dukkha*]. Birth [*jāti*] is unsatisfactory. growth and decay [*jarā*] is unsatisfactory, disease [*vyādhi*] is unsatisfactory, death [*maraṇaṃ*] is unsatisfactory, grieving, lamenting, distress

and stress [*domanassupāyāsā*] are unsatisfactory. Being brought into the company of disagreeable persons [*appiyehi sampayogo*] is unsatisfactory, being taken away from the company of dear ones [*piyehi vippayogo*] is unsatisfactory. Being unable to get what one wishes for [*yam ' p ' icchaṃ na labhatī*] is unsatisfactory. In brief, grasping at things of the world on account of sensory stimuli [*pañcupādānakkhandhā*] is unsatisfactory.

This, O monks is the noble truth of the origin or genesis [*samudaya*] of the truth of unsatisfactoriness, namely this craving for [*taṇhā*] which leads to regeneration in Samsāra [*ponobhavikā*], associated with intense delight and attachment [*nandī rāgasahagatā*], delighting at every turn. This is the craving for sense delights, craving for Samsaric continuance and illogical wish for termination of Samsara [*vibhava taṇhā*]

This, O monks, is the noble truth of cessation of unsatisfactoriness [*dukkhanirodha*]. namely the total cessation without any subdue of that craving [*asesa-virāga-nirodho*], abandonment [*paṭinissago*], release [*mutti*] and non-clinging [*anālayo*].

This, O monks, is the noble truth of the way leading to the total cessation of unsatisfactoriness [*dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā*]. It is this Noble Eightfold Path, namely corrected view [*sammā diṭṭhi*] corrected thought patterns [*sammā saṅkappo*], corrected ways of speech [*sammā vacā*], corrected bodily activity [*sammā kammanto*], corrected forms of livelihood [*sammā ājīvo*], corrected forms of endeavour [*sammā vāyāmo*], corrected mindfulness [*sammā sati*] and corrected concentration of mind [*sammā samādhi*].

O monks, I got this insight [*cakkhuṃ udapādī*], this awareness [*ñāṇaṃ*], this wisdom [*paññā*], this knowledge [*vijjā*] and this illumination [*āloko*] with regard to **the Noble Truth of Unsatisfactoriness of Life**, quite apart from or unheard of in the relevant teachings of the time [*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu*].

Then O monks, the thought occurred to me that this Truth of

Unsatisfactoriness should be apprehended by me [*pariññeyyan ' tī*]. Then it occurred to me that I had apprehended it [*pariññātan ' tī*]. This was the manifestation of light in my life. [*cakkhu = ñāṇa = paññā = vijjā = āloko udapādi.*]

[This means self-acquired vision and wisdom with regard to the reality of life. It is not an illumination that comes from outside.]

O monks, I got this insight [*cakkhum udapādi*], this awareness [*ñāṇam*], this wisdom [*paññā*], this knowledge [*vijjā*] and this illumination [*āloko*] with regard to **the Noble Truth of the Cause of Unsatisfactoriness of Life**, quite apart from or unheard of in the relevant teachings of the time [*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu*].

Then O monks, the thought occurred to me that this Truth of the Cause of Unsatisfactoriness should be abandoned by me [*pahātabban ' tī*]. Then it occurred to me that I had abandoned it [*pahīnan ' tī*]. This was the manifestation of light in my life. [*cakkhu = ñāṇa = paññā = vijjā = āloko udapādi.*]

[This means **self-acquired vision and wisdom** with regard to the reality of life. It is **not an illumination that comes from outside**.]

O monks, I got this insight [*cakkhum udapādi*], this awareness [*ñāṇam*], this wisdom [*paññā*], this knowledge [*vijjā*] and this illumination [*āloko*] with regard to **the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Unsatisfactoriness of Life**, quite apart from or unheard of in the relevant teachings of the time [*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu*].

Then O monks, the thought occurred to me that this Truth of the Cessation of Unsatisfactoriness should be realized by me [*sacchikātabban ' tī*]. Then it occurred to me that I had realized it [*sacchikatan ' tī*]. This was the manifestation of light in my life. [*cakkhu = ñāṇa = paññā = vijjā = āloko udapādi.*]

[This means **self-acquired vision and wisdom** with regard to the reality of life.

It is **not an illumination that comes from outside.**].

O monks, I got this insight [*cakkhuṃ udapādi*], this awareness [*ñāṇaṃ*], this wisdom [*paññā*], this knowledge [*vijjā*] and this illumination [*āloko*] with regard to **the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Unsatisfactoriness of Life**, quite apart from or unheard of in the relevant teachings of the time [*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu*].

Then O monks, the thought occurred to me that this Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Unsatisfactoriness should be developed by me [*bhāvetabban 'tī*]. Then it occurred to me that I had developed [*bhāvītan 'tī*]. This was the manifestation of light in my life. [*cakkhu = ñāṇa = paññā = vijjā = āloko udapādi*].

[This means **self-acquired vision and wisdom** with regard to the reality of life. It is **not an illumination that comes from outside.**].

As long as, O monks, my knowledge and insight [*ñāṇadassana*] was not perfectly well cleansed [*na suvisuddham*] by working out the four noble truths in terms of their three-fold gradations [*tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ*, i.e. knowing from outside about the truth itself, endeavouring to personalise it in one's own life and the achievement of that aspiration in one's own life.], so long I never claimed in the world of gods and men, including the sramaṇas and brahmins that I was the fully enlightened Buddha.

Only after, O monks, my knowledge and insight [*ñāṇadassana*] was perfectly well cleansed by working out the four noble truths in terms of their three-fold gradations [*tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ*, i.e. knowing from outside about the truth itself, endeavouring to personalise it in one's own life and the achievement of that aspiration in one's own life.], did I claim in the world of gods and men, including the sramaṇas and brahmins that I was the fully enlightened Buddha.

In me there arose knowledge and insight. Emancipation of my mind [*me cetovimutti*] is unassailable [*akuppā*]. This indeed is my last birth [*ayaṃ antimā*

jāti]. Now there is no more [to me] of being born again [*natthi ' dāni punabbhavo*].

This the Buddha declared. The Fivefold Group of Bhikkhus rejoiced over what the Buddha said. While this exposition [*veyyākaraṇasmim*] was being made, there arose in Venerable Koṇḍañña the clear and blemishless eye of wisdom [*virajaṃ vītamaḷaṃ dhamma-cakkhuṃ*] that **whatever is of the nature of coming into being all that is also of the nature of ceasing to be** [*yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirohadhammaṃ ' ti*].

Thus when the Wheel of the Law [*dhamma cakka*] was set rolling [*pavattite*] by the Buddha, gods of the terrestrial regions [*Bhummā devā*] made a loud proclamation [made the noise to be heard] that ' this wheel of the dhamma has been set rolling by the Buddha the Deer Park in Isipatana which is not to be reversed or assailed [*appativattiyaṃ*] by any recluse or Brahmin, god or Mara or even by any Brahmā in this world.

[This word *appativattiyaṃ* is **grossly misunderstood in Sri Lanka** and is translated as '**not to be done or carried out.**' The Pali here only means that the message of the Buddha is ' irreversible or cannot be challenged or turned back.'].]

Having heard this proclamation [*saddam* = sound] of the gods of the terrestrial regions [*Bhummā devā*], the gods of the Realm of Four Great Kings [*Cātummahārājika*] repeated it ...[and so on through Tāvātimsa gods ... Yāma gods ... Tusita gods .. Nimmānarati ... Paranimmitavasavatt gods... up to Brahmakāyikā gods. [See Note below].

Here at that very moment, at that very instance, up to the world of the Brahmās, the sound ascended. And this Ten Thousand World System shook, tremorred and trembled. There appeared in the world an infinite glow of light, transcending the divine grandeur of the gods.

Thereupon the Exalted One expressed this utterance of joy: Indeed Koṇḍañña has comprehended the teaching [dhamma]. Indeed Koṇḍañña has

comprehended the teaching [dhamma]. Thus Venerable Koṇḍañña' s name thereafter came to be **Aññāta -Koṇḍañña.**

[Note. The more authentic Canonical records of this event of the Dhammacakkappavattana Suttanta in the Samyutta Nikaya [SN. V. p. 423] and the Vinaya [Vin. I. p.12], the list of these proclaiming gods ends, with only eight regions or planes of extra-terrestrial existence. The list ends with Brahmakāyikā deva. But the Dhammacakkappavattana Suttanta of the Paritta Reciters [Bhāṇaka] of Sri Lanka have an enlarged list of twenty two such planes which contains very many more names of other planes of extra-terrestrial existence. The list is dramatically exciting, presenting as it were, more actors on the stage. It is a more detailed listing, being theatrically more attractive for the vast coverage of the heavenly regions of the Universe it provides.].